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IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) ~~The support assembly of claim 7, wherein the stepped surface further comprises:~~ A support assembly for supporting a workpiece, comprising:

a ceramic body having a first side and a second side disposed opposite the first side, the second side adapted to support the workpiece and having a stepped surface, the stepped surface having a center portion, an intermediate portion and an outer portion, wherein a center portion extends farthest below the first side of the ceramic body;

a heating element disposed in the ceramic body;

a plate coupled to the ceramic body; and

a channel defined between the first side of the ceramic body and a first side of the plate.

9. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[7]] , wherein the stepped surface further comprises:

a plurality of posts extending therefrom.

10. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[1]] , wherein the plate is fabricated from at least one material selected from the group of consisting of aluminum nitride, aluminum oxide and aluminum.

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11. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[1]] 8, wherein the ceramic body is fabricated from at least one material selected from the group of consisting of aluminum nitride, aluminum oxide or doped ceramics such as alumina doped with titanium oxide or chromium oxide, doped aluminum oxide and doped boron-nitride.
12. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[1]] 8 further comprising:  
a ceramic stem connected to the body.
13. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim 12, wherein the stem is disposed through a hole in the plate.
14. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[1]] 8, wherein the stem further comprises:  
a means for retaining the plate in a position relative to the ceramic body.
15. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[1]] 8 further comprising:  
a plurality of fasteners coupling the plate to the ceramic body.
16. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[1]] 8, wherein the plate further comprises:  
a plurality of slots; and  
a fastener disposed through at least one slot coupling the plate to the ceramic body.
17. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[1]] 8 further comprising:  
a means for releasably retaining the plate in a position relative to the ceramic body.
18. (Original) The support assembly of claim 17, wherein the means for retaining the plate is at least one retention device selected from the group consisting of a brazing material, an adhesive, a fastener, a lift pin guide mating threaded portions, a press fit or a bayonet fitting.

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19. (Original) The support assembly of claim 18, wherein the means for retaining the plate further comprises:  
a first flange coupled to the ceramic body; that interfaces with a flange in the plate.
20. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[1]] 8 further comprising:  
a ring supported by an end of the body and defining a plenum therewith; and  
a plurality of apertures formed through the body and fluidly communicating with the plenum.
21. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim [[1]] 8, wherein the ceramic body further comprises:  
a passage formed in and surrounded by the ceramic body, the passage having a first end and a second end both in fluid communication with the same surface of the support body, the first end disposed radially outward of the second end and in communication with the channel.
22. (Cancelled)
23. (Cancelled)
24. (Currently Amended) A support assembly for supporting a workpiece comprising:  
a ceramic body having a first side and a second side adapted to support the workpiece;  
a passage formed through the ceramic body having both a first end and a second end in  
fluid communication with the second side of the ceramic body;  
a heating element disposed in the ceramic body;  
a plate coupled to the ceramic body;  
a channel defined between the first side of the ceramic body and a first side of the plate,  
the channel in fluid communication with the second end of the passage; and ~~The support~~  
~~assembly of claim 21 further comprising:~~  
at least one lift pin guide disposed through the body and plate, the lift pin guide having a  
tab extending radially therefrom, the plate retained by the tab to the body.

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25. (Currently Amended) A support assembly for supporting a workpiece comprising:  
a ceramic body having a first side and a second side adapted to support the workpiece;  
a stem coupled to the first side of the plate ceramic body;  
a plate circumscribing the stem and disposed adjacent to the first side of the ceramic  
body;  
a retaining means for releasably retaining the plate to the ceramic body; and  
a channel defined between the first side of the ceramic body and a first side of the plate.
26. (Original) The support assembly of claim 25, wherein at least a portion of the channel is  
formed in at least one of the plate or the ceramic body.
27. (Original) The support assembly of claim 25, wherein the channel further comprises:  
a first portion having an orientation at least partially circumscribing a center axis of the  
support assembly; and  
a second portion having plurality of radially extending passages.
28. (Original) The support assembly of claim 27, wherein the ceramic body further  
comprises:  
a plurality of apertures disposed through the ceramic body between the first surface and  
the second surface and fluidly coupled to the radially extending passages.
29. (Cancelled)
30. (Cancelled)
31. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim 25, where the plate means further  
comprises:  
a plurality of slots; and  
a fastener disposed through at least one slot coupling the plate to the ceramic body.
32. (Cancelled)

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33. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim ~~[[32]]~~ 25, wherein the means for retaining the plate is at least one retention device selected from the group consisting of a ~~brazing material, an adhesive,~~ a fastener, a lift pin guide mating threaded portions, a press fit or a bayonet fitting.
34. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim ~~[[32]]~~ 25, wherein the means for retaining the plate further comprises:  
a first flange coupled to the ceramic body; that interfaces with a flange in the plate.
35. (Original) The support assembly of claim 25, wherein the ceramic body further comprises:  
a passage formed in and surrounded by the ceramic body, the passage having a first end and a second end both in fluid communication with the same surface of the support body, the first end disposed radially outward of the second end and in communication with the channel.
36. (Currently Amended) The support assembly of claim ~~[[22]]~~ 25 further comprising a ring supported by the body and defining a plenum therewith, the plenum fluidly communicating with the apertures.
37. (New) The support assembly of claim 8, wherein the channel is at least partially defined in the ceramic body.
38. (New) The support assembly of claim 8, wherein the channel is at least partially defined in the plate.
39. (New) The support assembly of claim 8, wherein the channel further comprises:  
a first portion having an orientation at least partially circumscribing a center axis of the support assembly; and  
a second portion having plurality of radially extending passages.

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40. (New) The support assembly of claim 39, wherein the ceramic body further comprises:  
a plurality of apertures disposed through the ceramic body between the first surface and  
the second surface and fluidly coupled to the radially extending passages.
41. (New) The support assembly of claim 8, wherein the ceramic body further comprises:  
a vacuum port disposed through the ceramic body.
42. (New) The support assembly of claim 24, wherein the body further comprises:  
a plurality of apertures formed through the body in fluid communication with the channel.